

MEMORANDUM FOR: SRP

Regarding DD/NFAC's request for the development of a list of priority issues for NFAC research, you may want to glance through the attached. It foreshadows the future research planning procedure in part. I participated in the meeting of the RPSG at which it was discussed and would be glad to report on it.

Let's schedule

Date 29 AUG 1980

Amb. Leonhart
Gen. Palmer

Exec. Assistant
Retain or Destroy

ALL
JS



hooker like an elaborate plan to make sure that research doesn't interfere with current intelligence and policy support.

Date 29 August 1980

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20 August 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: R. E. Hineman
Deputy Director, NFAC

SUBJECT: NFAC Research Program

1. At the conclusion of the 6 August meeting of the Research Planning Steering Group, you asked several of us to formulate a proposal for handling the NFAC Research Program. In addressing your request, we have tried to bear in mind the requirements on D/NFAC to structure an overall work program, to display its component parts in a manner that promotes internal planning, coordination and research management, and at the same time to inform consumers of the scope and nature of the effort underway in the Directorate.

2. Our discussions have persuaded us that two publications are desirable: The first is an NFAC Production Program along the lines discussed in our meeting--a frequently issued index of reports expected to be completed in the near term. The second publication, which we propose as a companion document, is the NFAC Research Program which would be published annually, would survey the exploratory research being pursued by NFAC, and whose preparation would provide the primary mechanism for NFAC planning and resource allocation reviews.

3. Conceptually and procedurally, the NFAC Research Program should deal with "tomorrow's estimate" and should consist of two parts. Part I should contain a plan for NFAC work on Priority Issues that are in process. Part II should consist of a series of brief descriptions of exploratory research being pursued within each Office and should survey the general thrust of work not already spelled out in Part I. Research listed under Parts I or II which has reached the stage where production can be scheduled will be listed in the companion Production Program. By separating the Production Program from the Research Program, and by dividing the Research Program into two distinct portions, we believe we can clarify the processes by which they are to be prepared.

4. The most complex portion of the NFAC Research Program is the identification, selection, structuring and allocation of resources to the Priority Issues. As a concept, we believe there are several attributes Priority Issues ought to have: they should be important, they should pose complex questions which transcend the individual analyst or office and hence require multidisciplinary attack, and they should be cast at a level of specificity that is "operative". To be operative an issue must be neither so broad that helpful guidance to an issue team is

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impossible, e.g. "Causes of Political Unrest," nor so narrow that a reasonably inquisitive review of the research effort in a substantive area is overly constrained, e.g. [redacted]

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[redacted] Drawing on some of the work already done by the Cardinal Issues subgroups, we have attached at Annex A some examples of issues we believe display the proper attributes.

5. Once proposed in general terms, we recommend that the structuring of Priority Issues for resource decision making proceed in five steps. First, an issues team is appointed by D/NFAC which consists of those experts most familiar with the subject matter at hand. It is the task of the issues team to take a general question represented by a proposed Priority Issue and to define the subordinate, substantive lines of inquiry. This is done in step two where the members of the issues team share the information they hold separately so that all may grasp the dimensions of the problem and in step three where they develop key research themes. Step four may involve additional or different experts who must reduce the research themes to a proposed research program of specifically scheduled building block projects and overview papers. There may or may not be sufficient work in progress within NFAC to cover the proposed program, even after some adjustments are attempted within individual Offices. Step five, as a result, is a resource allocation decision by senior managers to add resources, change the timing of work or alter other priorities. Once these decisions are made, a project leader must be designated and a reporting system set up to synchronize research and production. An example of a finished plan completed by such a five part cycle is attached at Annex B.

6. Because the conceptualization, structuring and scheduling of work on a Priority Issue is costly in terms of our most experienced resources, we recommend that only a few issues--say six to ten--be considered for any research planning cycle. Because the time horizon for completion of the research might vary from six months to several years, the Research Program might eventually contain numerous issues in various stages of completion. It is also possible that thoughtful review of a proposed issue will conclude that little or no work need be commissioned beyond that already in progress.

7. Finally, once a Priority Issue has been defined and structured to the point that resource allocation decisions have been made, a general summary of the various, subordinate lines of inquiry would be included in Part I of the Research Program. Detailed scheduling of the project milestones need not be shown for the published document but would be tracked on a separate information system by the project leader. See Attachment 1. (Annex A?)

8. Part II of the NFAC Research Program is to be prepared within individual offices for the purposes of describing exploratory research seen as necessary by those Offices in the discharge of their assigned

responsibilities. Also included are estimates of the level of effort devoted to various problems within the Office. An example is shown at Annex C.

9. Considered together, the NFAC Production Program and the NFAC Research Program will provide an improved appreciation of how NFAC resources are allocated and where problems are being slighted. Because of the high levels of effort devoted to current intelligence and current policy support, most of which requires immediate response, much of our work will be reflected only after it is completed. In preparing for tomorrow's questions, however, we believe an approach along the lines described above will be a significant addition to our research management system.

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Helene L. Boatner
Director
Political Analysis

Maurice C. Ernst
Director
Economic Research

R. M. Huffstutler
Director
Strategic Research

Attachment:

NFAC Research Program on Soviet
Military Policies and Forces in
the 1980s, dated 29 October 1979

- Annex A: Examples of NFAC Priority Issues
- Annex B: Example of the NFAC Research Program,
Part I
- Annex C: Example of the NFAC Research Program,
Part II

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